REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The following remarks are responsive to the Office Action mailed on January 03, 2006. Reconsideration of the instant application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4 and 21-36 are pending. Claims 1-4 and 21-36 are rejected.

Claims 1-4 and 21-33 remain in the application.

Rejection under 35 USC §112

Claims 34-36 are rejected as failing to comply with the written description requirement. In an effort to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicant has canceled claims 34-36 thereby making the rejection moot.

Rejections under 35 USC §102/103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 21-33 under 35 USC §102/103 as being unpatentable over US Application No. 005233096A, Lundquist et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The instant invention is patentably distinct from US 005233096 because the catalyst of the present invention as claimed in independent claims 1 and 26 must either contain 0.1 to 1.0 millimole sulfone groups per gram of dry catalyst or 0.1 to 1.0 mmol sulfone bridging groups per gram dry catalyst respectively. US 005233096 neither discloses, teaches, or suggests this requirement of 0.1 to 1.0 millimole sulfone groups per gram of dry catalyst or 0.1 to 1.0 mmol sulfone bridging groups per gram dry catalyst. The idea that the sulfones are an inherent part of US 005233096A is inaccurate as demonstrated by Applicant's comparative example in which the catalyst of US 005233096A is compared to the catalyst of the present invention. The addition of the sulfone groups/sulfone bridging groups increases resistance to deformation thereby improving the compressibility characteristic as shown in

Table 2 of Applicant's specification. In Table 2, Columns A, D, and F represent the catalysts of US 005233096A containing no sulfone groups. Columns B, C, and E each contain the requisite amount of sulfone groups. When each of compounds containing the comparable % DVB is compared, one of ordinary skill in the art can see that the compounds containing catalysts having sulfone groups have at lease a two-fold increase in compression modulus or resistance to deformation than those without the sulfone groups, the catalysts of US 005233096A. Thus including sulfone groups as demonstrated by Applicant's Table 1 adds an inventive step over the prior art. Because this requirement is not only for the independent claims but is incorporated into all dependant claims as well, Applicant asserts that Claims 1-4 and 21-33 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all objections with respect to these claims.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103

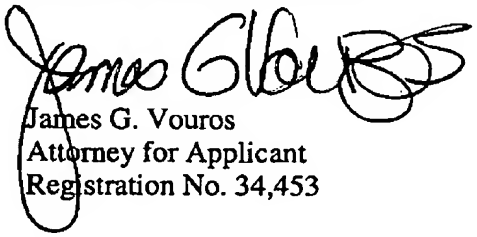
Claims 34-36 are rejected as failing being unpatentable over US005233096A. As aforementioned, in an effort to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicant has canceled claims 34-36 thereby also making this rejection moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above Amendments and Remarks, Applicants believe that the pending claims, Claims 1-4 and 21-33 are in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicants hereby authorize the Commissioner to charge any fees which may be required or credit for overpayment for entry of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 18-1850.

Respectfully submitted,



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